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other men and women capable of leaving a deep impression on them? A dear friend of the reviewer, Professor Nathan Soederblom, of Upsala, remarks, in a recent work: "A man may, indeed, have doubts as to the divinity of God, but he cannot doubt the divinity of Christ." Essentially the same thought would perhaps be expressed in a form that comes nearer to our modern consciousness, if it were said that the highest ideal is suggested in human life rather than in the order of nature. It is not to be denied, however, that, by a process of personification, these "super-personal, super-real uniformities of nature" may warm the modern mystic's heart and inspire a truly devotional feeling. Witness the hymns with which the volume concludes.

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WHAT IS PRAGMATISM? By James Bisset Pratt, Ph. D. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1909. Pp. xii, 254.

This book consists of six lectures given at the Glenmore Summer School in 1908, and the author frankly warns us in his preface that his attitude is that of a critic. He is a very painstaking, serious, and efficient, but too lenient critic. When one is convinced, as undoubtedly Mr. Pratt is, that pragmatism is very poor philosophy, why should one not say so more forcibly? I feel sure that many a reader of Mr. Pratt will close the book with the thought that pragmatists have made a rather poor case of it, but not so very bad a case when one realizes that most philosophy is hair-splitting anyway; and this judgment will be due to Mr. Pratt's method of refutation. In my opinion, Lectures II, III, and IV should have been condensed into one.

The first lecture already abundantly proves that whatever pragmatism has been emphasizing with good reason is by no means the special property of pragmatism. As a matter of fact, philosophers do not harp upon these things because there is no need of doing so; for, after all, we no longer live in the Middle Ages. "Away with logomachy and meaningless abstraction!" pragmatists cry, and Mr. Pratt answers: "But alas! where is the foe? Who is it that is championing logomachy and meaningless abstractions? If belief in clear thought and the other admirable things named above be pragmatism,

are we not all pragmatists? . . . And if we are all pragmatists, and there be no foe to fight, the rather disconcerting question presents itself, Why should we make such fuss about it?" (p. 8, *cf.* p. 138). Or, when it comes to 'truth,' pragmatists say it is 'usefulness,' and ask, *Does it work?* (p. 15)—but *who* does not ask, *Does it work?* "Pragmatism either stands for an absurdity or else, so far as I can see, it has contributed nothing of importance to the problem in question" (p. 38). Again, when pragmatists gravely say that we should discuss only that which is worth discussing, and further insist that the intellectual desire to know be admitted as a pragmatic interest; in this case, says Mr. Pratt, "I cannot see that pragmatism helps us one whit in the solution of our problem" (p. 43). And that is about all: whenever it is reasonable, pragmatism is commonplace itself.

The only originality it can claim consists in various attempts to obliterate the distinction between logical and psychological truth (what man will consider true and what he ought to consider true); the pragmatic criterion, "the expedient in our way of thinking," being of a psychological and ethical nature, would not be applicable if one remained strictly in the domain of logic. This confusion, the original sin of pragmatism, is so obviously unphilosophical that no pragmatist of insight will ever follow his arguments to the end. Professor James even found it impossible to adhere to the original theory of Mr. Peirce, which is perfectly consistent with pragmatic principles, although obviously untenable, that "any difference of philosophical meaning can be brought down to some particular consequence in future practical experience." Mr. Peirce meant 'active experience,' but Professor James feels compelled to admit that it may be either *active* or *passive* (p. 19). But if this suggestion of Professor James is accepted, where is the difference from any other philosophy? Mr. Schiller makes the same concession when he says, "All consequences are practical sooner or later" (p. 23). What difference then remains between practical and non-practical, and what becomes of pragmatism?

In Lectures II, III, and IV Mr. Pratt searches the book of pragmatists diligently, patiently, persistently, and he finds nothing except ideas regarding which nobody disagrees; or else ever-renewed attempts to do away with the intellectual

criterion of truth in favor of the practical, all of which was already explained in Lecture I. In Lecture II, for instance, Mr. Pratt examines at great length the pragmatic theory: "a claim not yet verified is not yet a truth." One certainly can accept this proposition from the standpoint of the theory of knowledge (which is psychology), meaning: As long as I do not realize the truth of a theory, it is not a truth *for me*. But from the logical point of view the proposition is absurd; whether a child knows the theorem of Pythagoras or not does not make the theorem less true *per se*. Of course, the point is that pragmatists wished to take advantage of the ambiguity of words in the proposition in order to abandon the distinction between a truth of which we are conscious and a truth *per se*. We 'make' the truth, they say; and how can we 'make' it? To be sure, only by accepting the pragmatic test. Mr. Pratt devotes many pages to refuting this sophistry, when one single sentence of his would have sufficed: "It is clear enough that there is a difference between a thing and its tag" (p. 62).

In Lecture III the author tests the extraordinary attempt of pragmatists to reduce the meaning of *verifiability* to that of *verification* (pp. 101 ff). Mr. Pratt rejects it by saying that it is a confusion between *truth* and *trueness*. Nothing can be plainer to anyone accustomed to deal with philosophical problems; hence, why devote almost an entire lecture to the subject, especially since it is the same theory which has already been refuted in Lecture II: "a claim not yet verified is not yet a truth"?

The fourth lecture, both as regards the pragmatic argument and the refutation, is likewise a repetition, in other words, of the third and of the second lectures. Under the pretext of finding out whether knowledge is *saltatory* or *ambulatory*, pragmatists try to accuse other philosophies of transcendentalism. When Mr. Pratt comes to determine what 'transcendentalism,' in this case, really means, he finds that pragmatists are just as guilty of indulging in it as their imaginary foes. Here again we see plainly enough the purpose of the pragmatists in "insisting that knowledge can be sufficiently described without going beyond the experience of the knowing individual" (pp. 166, 167). They want us to believe not only that the 'knowledge' of truth depends upon our perception of it, but that our perception 'makes' the truth. A single sentence

would have been enough to dispel the misunderstanding so skillfully brought about, and it is regrettable that Mr. Pratt waited until page 167 to ask the question, "When one is **mis-taken** but satisfied, does he know?"

To sum up, Mr. Pratt ably refutes all the arguments of the pragmatists which he examines. What he does not do, but what he might have done, is to make us realize that they are practically the same argument all the time. Pragmatists will certainly not consider themselves beaten by the many refutations; they will simply offer the same arguments under still other forms, and Mr. Pratt will have the trouble of a new refutation. In other words, instead of exposing various applications of the pragmatic method, the author ought to have exposed the method itself; it would have been both shorter and more effective. It is of no use cutting off the heads of the monster, as they will grow as fast as they are cut: one must pierce his heart.

A word concerning the last two lectures. In the fifth, Mr. Pratt explains that while personally pragmatists have generally shown strong religious inclination, the strictly logical attitude of pragmatism toward religion should be skepticism; and in the sixth he expresses his regrets that pragmatism must ultimately favor low ideals in philosophy, that it must take us away from the Platonic, spiritual view of things. He does not like to see biologists apply their formulas to ethics, or 'scientific' psychologists account for our emotions and thoughts as if they were only physiological reactions. One might agree with Mr. Pratt that pragmatism ought theoretically to lead to such non-Platonic conceptions; but as a matter of fact, has he not shown himself in Lecture V that the actual affiliations of pragmatists are rather with theology than with materialism? So let us wait; pragmatism may be forgotten when the time for logical application comes.

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MISCELLANIES. Fourth Series. By John Morley. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1908.

Lord Morley describes his fourth series of "Miscellanies" as "fugitive pieces, but perhaps not altogether without a clue." The clue is to be found in the fact that four of the seven papers